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During this unprecedented time for the Church it is important for us all to make use of resources and links that will help us stay connected as a parish communities.

Introducing the Eucharistic celebration of 16 March at Casa Santa Marta, Pope Francis said:

"I think of families, closed up, the children not going to school, perhaps the parents cannot go out, and some will be in quarantine. May the Lord help them to find new ways, new expressions of love and shared life in this new situation." Which, he added, "is a beautiful opportunity to creatively rediscover true affection in the family." "Let us pray for the family, so that relationships within the family at this point in time may always flourish for the good."

Below are some resources for during the time of no public congregations at Mass.

If you have any useful suggestions and web links please send them to lianne.pap@rc-birmingham.org and I will endeavor to collate them as a resource for parishes

Live stream Mass links (please insert your parish link if you live stream)

Other live streams across the Diocese are:

<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/cameras/county/warwickshire>

<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/cameras/county/west-midlands>

<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/cameras/county/oxfordshire>

<http://www.catholicrentvale.org.uk/>

<http://www.stnewmancluster.org/>

Make an Act of Spiritual Communion

As we are now entering a time when we cannot attend Mass for a valid reason, and are therefore exempt from our Sunday obligation. During this time we are encouraged to make a Spiritual Communion when we desire to be in union with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This can be done whilst you watch a live stream of Mass being offered.

There are 2 options of prayer you can say.

You can make an act of Spiritual Communion by saying the following prayer:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen. (From St Aphonusus Liguori)

Or

I wish, my Lord, to receive You with the purity, humility and devotion
with which your Most Holy Mother received You,
with the spirit and fervour of the saints.

Come Lord Jesus.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with You,
give me warmth, delight and quickness in thinking upon You.

And give me Your grace to long for Your holy sacraments,
and specially to rejoice in the presence of Your very blessed Body,
Sweet Saviour Christ, in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. (From St Thomas More)

Or you may wish to print off the free prayer card produced by the Knights of the Holy Eucharist.

<https://www.knightsoftheholyeucharist.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Act-of-Spiritual-Communion.pdf>

What some of the saints have said about Spiritual Communion:

St Teresa of the Child Jesus said *“When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.”* – The Way of Perfection.

St John Vianney said *“If we are deprived of Sacramental Communion, let us replace it, as far as we can, by spiritual communion, which we can make every moment; for we ought to have always a burning desire to receive the good God. Communion is to the soul like blowing a fire that is beginning to go out, but that has still plenty of hot embers; we blow, and the fire burns again.”*

St Thomas Aquinas described Spiritual Communion as *“an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.”*

How to develop your own domestic Church in your home.

One of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* (“Light of the Nations”), describes the family as the ‘domestic Church’ because it is the first place where young, baptized Christians learn about their faith. During this time when families will be spending more time in the home following the school closures it presents more opportunities for our domestic Churches to be nurtured.

With more and more elderly relatives becoming isolated for their protection, families, if able, can still be united through the wonders of digital technology, or simply a phone call.

- Praying together as a family – set up a Whatsapp group and put aside a time each day where you all join together for prayer
- Help those isolated in your parish community (suggestion below taken from a social media post that originated in Devon)

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

<input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail
<input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. **#ViralKindness**

Families praying together

A prayer for protection in time of a pandemic has been produced for free in prayer card form by the Knights of St Columbus here – <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/news-room/11036-protection-prayer.pdf>

How to pray a Family Rosary – <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/mary/rosary/how-to-pray-a-family-rosary>

Useful websites

<https://www.youcat.org/> - great resource for all ages explaining the faith of the Catholic Church and has an accompanying app via these links

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.youcat.daily&hl=en>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/youcat-daily/id1447116947?mt=8>

The Knights of St Columbus have put together a booklet for helping families build the Domestic Church and has month by month suggestions.

<https://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/programs/family-fully-alive/10162-family-fully-alive-booklet.pdf>

Finally the lovely quote from Fr John Peyton

“The family that prays together, stays together.”